

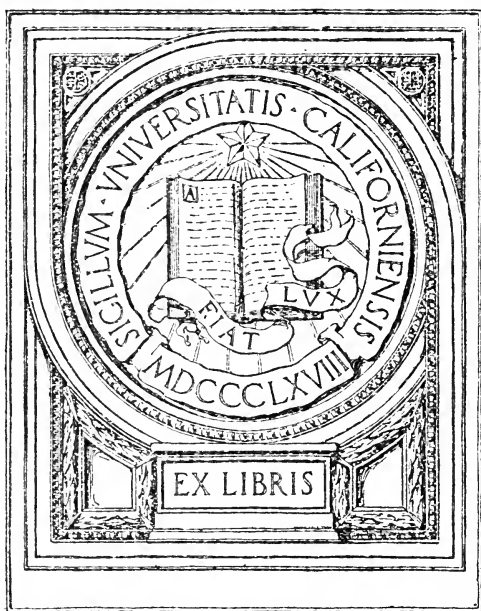
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Norse Words

IN THE

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Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

BY

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NORSE WORDS IN THE ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE.

BY ALBERT E. EGGE, PULLMAN, WASHINGTON.

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The first notice of Scandinavians touching the coast of England is found in the **ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE** for the year 787, when three pirate ships made a landing in the South. There were other raids in the North in the years 793 and 794, but then little is heard of the pirates for forty years, except as they troubled neighboring countries. In the year 835 they again began to harass the coasts of England, and from now on the Chronicle has circumstantial notices of their movements. In 866 the invaders occupied East Anglia, and in a few years they were in possession of all England east of a line running from London to Chester, King Alfred retaining only what was west of this line.

The **ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE** has come down to us in seven manuscripts of various length and importance, one of which, the Laud Manuscript, runs to the year 1154, about seventy-five years beyond the longest of the others. It therefore has the largest number of Norse words, especially in that part which extends beyond the time covered by the other manuscripts. It is supposed to have been written between the years 1121 and 1154, at Peterborough in Northamptonshire, where Scandinavians had settled thickly, and in the contemporary speech of that district, and it is therefore a good example of how the Norse speech was beginning to affect the English in that part of England where the Scandinavians were numerous. In this manuscript several Norse words are found very early, long before they occur in the other manuscripts and before the Northern pirate invasions are known to have begun. These parts of the manuscript are, however, additions and interpolations not found in the others: hence the late form of the language in which they are composed. The Laud Manuscript was written in 1121 and the following years, being for the most part copied from earlier manuscripts, and the language differs little from that of the others except in the interpolations and the addition extending beyond the time covered by any of the other manuscripts, that is the period from 1079 to 1154. These parts seem to have been composed in the form of English then spoken in that district. In the chronological list I give of Norse words in the **ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE** I therefore ignore the words found in the early part of the Laud Manuscript, as they represent the language of a much later period.

In the year 871, the year when Alfred became king, we find for the first time the English word *earl* (*EORL*) used in the sense of the Norse *JARL*, the meaning which the word has ever since retained, *EORL* (later *earl*) little by little supplanting *EALDORMAN*. This is a case of borrowed meaning. The word is very common after 871 and usually in this new sense. In the same year there are two instances of the word *GEFYLC*, meaning a division of an army, and it occurs again in 1052, 1065, and 1094. It is otherwise a rare word in English, and its use in the Chronicle at such a time may be due to the Norse *FYLKI*, which was a very com-

mon word and must have been in frequent use by the invaders. In 879 we first meet with the word viking (WICENGA, gen. pl.), which occurs again in 885 (twice), 921 (WICINGA), and 982. In 1098 is found "out-viking" (UTWIKINGAN, dat. pl.), which has the same meaning. The word HOLM, which in Old English meant the sea, was changed by Norse influence to mean an islet. In this sense it is found in 902 and again in 1025. The word HOLD, a title of rank borne by some of the invaders, is found in 905, 911, and 921. In the year 959 is the first instance of the word law in the sense in which we still use it. The original word for law in Old English was ~~DOM or ASETNISS~~. In 963 we find the word first (FYRSTE), which does not occur again till 1125 (FYRST), 1128 (FIRSTE), and 1132 (ALREFYRST). This word is not found in German, except as a noun, and the usual form for first in Old English, like the German, is ~~ALFREST~~, which in later English becomes less and less common, first taking its place. In the Scandinavian languages first (FYRST, FÖRST) is the only word used in that sense, and it seems probable that the substitution of first for erst in English is due to the common use of that word by the Norse people in England. In 963 is found for the first time also the word FRA, which has ever since remained in the language, having in later English, like other words with long A, assumed the form FRO. GEATAN, to say yea, grant, formed as if from GEA, is a rare word in English, whereas the corresponding Norse JATA (JATTA) is very common, and the use of GEATAN may be due to the Norse equivalent. It is found in 963, 1066, and 1087. In 1002 is first found the Norse word GRITH, peace, which at once became common and remained long in the language. From it was formed the verb GRITHIAN, "to make a truce or peace," "to take under one's protection," which occurs for the first time in the Chronicle in 1016 and thenceforth is very common. The word LETAN, to let, borrowed from the Norse equivalent the meaning "to consider, suppose, think," which is common in Middle English, and of which there are several examples also in the Chronicle. The first is found in the year 1005. Other examples are found in 1052 (D*) and 1076 (D). In 1008 is found the Norse word SCEGTH, scaegth (O. N. SKEITH), "a light swift-sailing ship." In 1012 is found the word husting (HUSTINGE, C. D;—æ, F;—A, E; dat. sing.), a meeting, council, which occurs only once in the Chronicle. The English form of the word, which does not appear to have been used, would have been HUSTHING. The verb outlaw (UTLAGIAN, GEUTLAGIAN) appears for the first time in 1014, and after that is very common. The noun (UTLAH, O. N. UTLAGI) is first found in 1048. It seems probable that law and outlaw are Norse words, as they are not found in German, nor in English before this time (law from 959). In 1055 occurs the form inlaw (GEINLAGODE, pret. sing.). In the year 1016 we first find the word fellow (FEOLOGAN, D, pl.), which was formed in imitation of the Old Norse FELAGI. It does not occur again in the Chronicle. SAMMELE, "agreed, united," which is found in 1018 (D, E) and not elsewhere in English, is doubtless derived from the Old Norse SAMMALA, which has the same meaning. In 1031 is found the word TAPERÆX, which may be the same as the Old Norse TAPAREX. The first part of the compound is explained as being Slavonic and meaning AXE. The Norse loan-word LITHSMEN, used in the sense of sailors, is found

*The letters C, D, E (for Laud), F refer to manuscripts so marked in Earle and Plummer's *TWO SAXON CHRONICLES PARALLEL*, Oxford, 1892.

in 1036, 1046 (LITSMEN), 1047 (LITSMANNA), and 1050. LITH. fleet, is found in 1052, 1066, 1068, 1069, and 1071, a very common word. SCILITH, also meaning fleet, is found in the year 1055. The word HUSCARL, "a member of the king's body-guard," which first appears in 1036 (HUSCARLUM), occurs again in 1041 (HUSCARLA), 1054 (HUSCARLUM), 1065 (HUSKARLAS), and 1070 (HUSCARLES). The words HAMULE or HAMELE (HAMULAN, HAMELAN, dat. sing.), found in 1039, and HA, found in 1040, and both meaning rowlock, are borrowed from the Old Norse HAMLA and HAR. HAS.ETA, rower, thole-sitter, which is found in 1052 (HAS.ETON, E, pl.), is also borrowed. (Old Norse HA-SËTJA). The word weatherfast (WEDERFESTE, pl.), which occurs in 1046 and means weather-bound, is perhaps an imitation of the Norse term for the same idea, which is still weather-fast. In 1048 are found the words BUNDA and HUSBUNDA, boardholder, derived from the Norse BONDI and HUSBONDI. In 1049 is found the Norse NITHING, a worthless fellow; UNNITHING, not a nothing, "an honest man," occurring in 1087. In 1049 is found also the phrase SCYLODE OF MALE, meaning "paid off, dismissed," which is an imitation of the Old Norse SKILJA AF MALL, to pay off. In 1050 is found SETTE OF MALE, which means the same thing, paid off. In 1055 occurs the phrase ABIDEN HEORA MALES, they "awaited their pay," and in 1086 DEORE TO MALE, "on hard terms." This word MAL, "suit, cause, agreement," is the Norse form of the English MÆL, which we now pronounce meal. In 1052 it is found in THER BÆR GODWINE EORL UP HIS MAL, there Earl Godwin expounded his case. In WITHERMAL, "counter-plea, defence," which is found in the same year (1052 D WITHERMALE, dat.), the word is used as the second part of the compound. In this word (MAL) we have an example of a borrowed form and a borrowed meaning. In 1052 and 1066 we find BUTSECARL, boatman, also a word brought to England by the people of the North. So is perhaps also CENEP (KENEPAS, NEPAS, acc. pl.), moustache, which is found in 1056 (C, D), and may come from Old Norse KANPR or KAMPR. The word FYLCIAN, to marshal troops, as in AND THER HIS LITH FYLCADE, and there marshalled his troops, which occurs in 1066 C, is doubtless a Norse word like GEFYLC mentioned above. In the same year we meet for the first time in English the word HIT (AND HYTTE HI BEGEONDAN EOFORWIC, D); it is derived from Old Norse HITTA. The form WYRRE, worse, which occurs in the same year, instead of the usual WYRSA, is thought to be due to assimilation to the Norse VERRI. In 1067, 1070, and 1122, is found the word FORUTAN, except, without, a combination which reminds one of the Norwegian FORUTAN and the Danish FORUDEN. I have, however, not found the word in Old Norse. CRAVE (CRAFAN), which occurs three times in 1070, may be of Northern origin. It is not found in German, nor in English before this time, whereas it is common in all the Scandinavian languages. The word take (TACAN), which gradually crowded out the old word NIMAN, is another Norse loan-word. It is found for the first time in 1072 (TOC) and occurs again in 1075, 1076, 1127 (TOC, TACEN), 1132 (TOCAN, TOC), and 1140 (TÆCEN, TOC). GRASCINNEN, made of gray skins, which occurs in 1075 (GRASCHYNNENE, D), is explained as probably coming from Old Norse GRA-SKINN, the name of a costly fur. In 1076 are found the two Norse words HOFDING (HOFDINGAS, D), derived from O. N., HÆFTHINGI, chieftain, and BRYDLOP (BRYDLOPE, D, dat.), derived from O. N. BRUTHLAUP, bridal, marriage feast. In 1085 is a solitary instance of the Norse STOR, large, which I have not found elsewhere in Old

English. In 1086 occurs CARLMAN, a male, a man, the first part of which is Norse. The English form was CEORL, churl. It appears again in 1137 (CARLMEN). In 1096 the O. N. word for battle, ORROSTA, appears in the form ORREST (ORRESTE, dat.), which is not found elsewhere in the Chronicle. In 1123 is found the plural of SANDERMAN, messenger, ambassador, formed in imitation of O. N. SENDIMATHR. In 1124 is found the first example in English of the word WRANG (wrong), which is believed to be borrowed from the Norse. ROTFEST, root-fast, firmly established, which is found in 1127, may have been made on the model of the O. N. ROT-FASTR. The word SWEIN (swain, young man) is first met with in 1128. The verb SCYRTE, in the expression THA SCYRTE THA FLESCMETE, then there was shortage of flesh-meat, which occurs in 1131, reminds one of O. N. SKORTA, which has the same meaning and is very common; still the English word may be original. In 1137 occur four Norse words, TIL, which appears again in 1140, BATHE (for the English BEGEN), CARLMEN (mentioned above), and DRAPEN, the imperfect plural of DREPA, which is derived from Norse DREPA, to kill. In 1140 is found LANGFRIÐÆI, Long Friday, that is Good Friday. In the Scandinavian languages the day is still called Long Friday. Other Norse words found in the same year are TÆCEN TOC, FRA, TIL, which have been mentioned above.

The first unmistakable Norse borrowing in the Chronicle appears in the year 871. But, as remarked above, in parts of the Laud Manuscript which are believed to have been interpolated, and hence to have been written in the language spoken about Peterborough at or after 1121, there are Norse words long before the pirate invasions began. Of those I have mentioned in chronological order from 871, EORL is found in 656, 675, and 777, FRA in 656, GEATAN in 656 and 675, and FIRST in 656 and 675. Besides these is BONDLAND, in 777, in which the first part is perhaps the same as BUNDA, householder; and SEOUETHENDE, seventh, in 656, the first instance of the introduction of x in the ordinals, which is believed to have been done in imitation of the corresponding Norse forms. Compare O. N. SJAUNDI, NORW. SJAUNDE, SJUNDE, DAN. SYVENDE.

Many of the proper names brought to England by the Norse settlers were retained by their descendants. Of such are found in the Chronicle Eric, Harold, Osborn, Seward, Swain, Thorold, and Thurston.

Besides the words enumerated above, there are in the Chronicle several others that may be of Scandinavian origin; but it is very difficult to find conclusive evidence either for or against such derivation, and I have therefore mentioned only those words as to the Norse origin of which there seems to be little or no doubt.

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